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NE M'OUBLIEZ PAS

TAYLOR SAYIG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. SENIOR THESIS PROJECT	1
A. PRESENTATION OF THEME AND RESEARCH	2
B. JOURNAL ENTRIES	6
C. DISCUSSION ON THE DANCERS	11
D. THE MUSIC	13
E. THE LIGHTING	15
F. THE COSTUMES	17
G. PUBLICITY	19
H. POST CONCERT REFLECTION & ANALYSIS	20
II. DANCE PERSPECTIVES	22
A. REFLECTION	23
B. ESSAY	31
III. CAREER BRIDGE	40
A. COMMERCIAL PERFORMING RESUME	41
B. PROFESSIONAL RESUME	42
C. HEADSHOT	44
IV. AESTHETIC STATEMENT	45
V. SENIOR SHOWCASE	50
A. SENIOR SHOWCASE SCRIPT	51
B. SENIOR REFLECTION	53
VI. EVERYTHING ELSE	56
A. CHOREOGRAPHER ASSIGNMENT	57
B. REVIEW OF HOLLY JOHNSTON	58
C. CALENDAR	59
D. MOVING TO A CITY: CHICAGO	66

I. THE SENIOR THESIS PROJECT

A. PRESENTATION OF THE THEME AND RESEARCH

I knew that I wanted to create a piece that expressed the struggles of a receding memory. This inspiration came from my great Uncle Eddie with whom I share a very close relationship. He is approaching the age of 90, and it seems as if each day he forgets a little more, dementia showing its symptoms a little more clearly everyday. I found it interesting how his short-term memory was terrible, yet his long-term memory was accurate. For example, it would boggle my mind that he could forget that I moved to California, yet when I took out his old photo album from World War II, he was able to tell stories of his adventures in details that made the experience almost tangible.

My Uncle's condition brought out the bittersweet sensation of nostalgia with the visitation to these old memories. He held so much glory in the stories he told us as they illustrated the peak of his life; he was young, strong, smart, and in love with his life. It is strange to see how time can take such a glorified young man and turn him into a lonely, wrinkled, forgetful old soul. This brought the universality of old age and the wasting away of a mind into the picture.

Inspiration came to me even further when I went to go visit my Uncle's 95-year-old sister, my Aunt Olga, in an assisted living home over break when I was home in Michigan. While my Uncle Eddie displayed the very beginning symptoms of dementia, my Aunt Olga exemplified dementia at its worst. Not only was she unable to recognize her own family, to who she once gave so much love, but when she spoke to us it was in gibberish and when she looked at us it was in a glazed over stare. It was heartbreaking to see such a once witty and intelligent woman be turned into this hunched over shaky person who's mind had failed her. This brought an eerie and heart wrenching element into the theme upon which I chose to focus.

Ultimately, I decided that this theme of memory loss was too human to be looked at from strictly a researched based, scientific standpoint. Rather it was a theme that had to be tackled in a more emotional way, with the help of artistry and researched information. The investigations that helped me to further develop this thesis were mostly experience based, with some elements of research used in the creation of movement motifs.

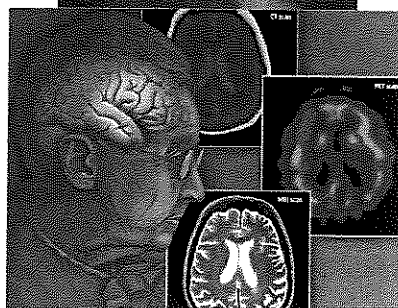
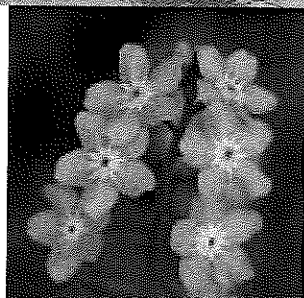
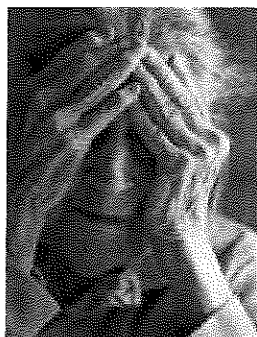
The experiences upon which I drew were the encounters that I shared with my Uncle and Aunt. I reflected upon how I felt in those situations with them and tried to tap into what they might have been feeling in those given times. The element of storytelling, which defines a huge part of my interactions with my Uncle Eddie, was used in the structuring of the dance. I wanted the dance to have a clear storyline—and that it did. I also wanted to touch upon the idea of stimuli triggering the reappearance of a memory. This was motivated by my uncle's ability to go back in time to when he was fighting in the War in his full glory. The very personal and human connection between my uncle and I inspired the connection that my dancers shared amongst one another. I wanted their association with one another to be real and not forced. I wanted them so actually share an experience rather than just put on a show.

The outside sources that I used in the development of movement were images I found when I googled 'memory loss,' 'forget,' and 'dementia.' The useful images that I took away from this experiment included a yarn tied around a finger, clusters of forget-me-nots, old wrinkled hands, and images of the brain. These images aided me in the creation of purposeful movement motifs. Another image that appeared in the piece was that of waves crashing onto a shore, wiping out anything in its path.

Through other research I discovered that there are four kinds of memory loss: executive, which is exclusive to goal directed activities, episodic, which is linked to specific past events, semantic, which relates to facts and history, and implicit, which conveys past experience and

learned behavior. Knowing the four different kinds of memory loss was helpful in determining how I would truthfully create movement that displayed this phenomenon. I knew it would take a real human connection to get my idea across to my audience. Thus, I decided to take a look at the work of choreographers who I thought did a brilliant job of pulling humanity into their creations. I studied videos of choreographic geniuses Mike Esperanza, Justin Giles, Dana Metz and Holly Johnston. From these videos I was able to better tap into the qualities that I admired in their work and learned how to put such elements into my choreography.

IMAGES



B. JOURNAL ENTRIES

OCTOBER

I started off by going into the studios and doing solo work. The first motif I began to work with was the idea of a string tied around a finger. I let this be the initiation point in all of my movement. I played around with different versions of this original phrase and changed focus, level, and directionality. A second motif that I brought into consideration was that of trying to collect an unraveling ball of yarn. To me, this unraveling of a tightly wound ball represented the loosening of a once sharp mind. I quickly changed mindsets and lost the focus of detail, falling into old habits of creating movement for its physical purpose and not because it was evoked from any sort of deep meaning. This led my phrasing and overall practice of my movement to become disconnected and a bit purposeless. I did not find real satisfaction in what I created, and now I realize it was because it was not meaningful to me. I was just doing it to do it, if that makes any sense.

In my meetings with Holly, we established that I needed to keep working with abstractions, keep creating variations of movement, to speak something specific, and to not disregard the subtlety of little details. One idea that helped me was thinking about moving one body part at a time and having a clear reason behind why that part was moving. It was clear that I needed to develop movement that was rooted from a deeper place as I was caught up in creating movement that may have been pleasing to the eye, but had no real purpose.

NOVEMBER

I met with my dancers in the studio in order to give to them the developed material I intended to keep. The phrase ideas with which we worked included the string around the finger phrase and the unraveling phrase. I eliminated from my repertoire the shallow, athletic movement that I played around with the previous month. I gave my dancers the phrases and allowed them to bring

themselves to the movement. They were welcome to play around with the timing, facing, speed, and interaction with the movement in this structured improvisation. They all took turns completing the first phrase, entering into a bit of improvisation, completing the second phrase, and ending with improvisation. I asked them to make connections with one another when they felt it was necessary, and from the videos reflection of these structured improvisation sessions, I got a lot of great ideas about what I wanted to put into my piece.

One wonderful aspect of improvisation is how beautifully spontaneous it is. I struggled a little bit with capturing this spontaneity in the work I was trying to set. After watching my lovely dancers interact with one another in their own way, motivated by their own thoughts, I was almost tempted to present my piece as a structured improv. As much joy as I got in watching them, I was a little discouraged, thinking that I would not be able to create something that looked half as decent as they way they did when they danced on impulse.

Holly suggested that to build structure and find out what I wanted my piece to feel like, I should keep working with improvisation. She told me to present the material and ask my dancers to play around with using different emotional states. One example of this was presenting the same material but telling that dancers to dance it as if everything is falling apart and they don't like it, or to imagine everything disappearing around them. She asked me to observe and analyze the effects of randomness in movement, spatial choices, asymmetry, layers, and the ritual feeling the improvisational experience gave off.

DECEMBER

I began to bring structure into my dance and focused on turning the outline of my phrase into a more concrete thought. In the structure, I kept the motifs I developed and incorporated weigh sharing. It was my goal not to allow a certain couple to dance together for too long because I didn't want the piece to be a series of duets. I took Holly's advice of playing around with

different emotional states and the idea of one person engulfing another as he or she feels defeat. Though I did bring a sense of structure to my dance, it was almost as if I threw up every aesthetic thing I liked about the past rehearsals and called that a dance. There was no real visual priority and there was too much layer to the point where one didn't know where to look. It was too much happening at once. I was afraid of giving one of my dancers too much attention or emphasis. I wanted to play fair and give each one of my dancers the time they deserved. Though this was nice of me, it was not helping the development of a story line and it was making my structure look a little frantic. I also decided to insert a small blip of unison into the movement, which I liked, but it seemed completely out of place.

When I met with Holly, she told me to catalogue the sequence of my dance in order to bring a little more clarity. To unify my ideas, she told me to allow for a "natural force" to pull my dancers into moments of unison. She asked me to hold onto the ideas of impulsivity and surprise. She also reminded me that at this point, the entirety of my dance was much more important than individuality and rather it was about my dancers creating a closeness between them.

JAUNARY

This month was spent getting back in touch with the movement. I met with my dancers as we reviewed the intentions and aesthetic quality of the movement. Over break I thought up another motif that I wanted to incorporate. I thought of memory loss as the image of a carefully constructed sandcastle being swept away by a relentless wave. I also thought of this loss as the erosion away at a seemingly impermeable foundation.

FEBRUARY

I met with my dancers and held another structured improvisation with this idea of ocean waves incorporated. This changed the mentality of my dance from a soft sadness to a desperate kind of anger. I liked seeing my dancers in this kind of discovery as they explored movement they

previously knew but approached it from a different angle. This also got them to move out of the structure that I was not finding satisfaction in. Having them engage in improv again made me realize how vital each and every one of them was to my dance. I was getting nearer to displaying the thematic purpose I desired.

After finding a little more clarity here, I was able to solidify the structure of my piece, incorporating all of the elements I was searching for and excluding the ones that were hindering my work. I was happy with where my piece was choreographically and structurally so I then began to consider the lighting and sound. I had been working with "La Vie en Rose" for a while but I knew that it needed more. I met with David and we finalized my music so that my dancers could get comfortable with it. The lighting was what needed to be addressed next. I knew what I wanted because of what I had discussed with Holly, but the lights were only something we could fake until tech time came around. I had all of the materials I needed, it was just a matter of gathering them all and piecing them together.

MARCH

Finally, I put an introduction to my dance that made sense. I started with each one of my dancers dancing a solo. My piece had a clear story line with a definite beginning, middle, and end. There were still a few transitions that needed work, and I continued working with my cast on small details all the way up until the performance time.

The movement alone was much more clearer than it had been previously and I am still a little bit unsure about how it all came together. I still held onto some of the motifs that I developed in the beginning, but there was much more depth to the movement. The structure was complete and the biggest element that was improved was visual priority. This just required me to calm down and focus on the meaning of all the movement rather than the way it looked. When I thought about

the intention behind it, the dancers exemplified the movement more fully and beautifully. Each detail held significance and my piece finally spoke something of value.

Holly asked me to keep working and to not settle. She explained that there is always improvement and development in art, it's just a matter of where you chose or are forced to stop creating. She gave me advice about where to find costumes that were fitting for the dance and suggested more specifics about the lighting of my piece to be determined during tech.

APRIL

All of my inhibitions were released with the tech run. I finally got to see my work come together in its full glory and from that point on, I knew the show would be fantastic. I felt like the whirlwind experience of creation had finally show its reward as I watched my piece on stage. After seeing my vision so perfectly played out in front of me, I decided that something was a little off. I asked my dancers to change their intention of grief and loss into one of bittersweet happiness, as if reliving their glory days. This is what made my piece perfect to me. When show time came around, I asked them to simply share an experience with each other that would create a personal memory for them. I already had my interpretation of the dance, now I was asking them to take their own personal story away from it. Still, they displayed my intention flawlessly as I watched like a proud mother from the audience.

I am sad to say that this choreographic experience is over, but I could not have asked for a more rewarding one. I am so extremely thankful to my dancers for embarking on this journey with me and I am proud of myself for having the drive to complete such a task. I will never forget this event that marked the end of my college career; I would not have my time here punctuated in any other way.

C. DISCUSSION OF THE DANCERS

Kia Hill

I chose to ask Kia to be in my piece because I think she possesses a kind of sincerity that is often hard to find in dancers. Much of a dancer's performance is putting on a face, but with Kia, her movement comes from a much deeper place. She has a maturity about her because of life experiences and I thought she would be able to bring a very humanistic quality to the movement. She displays a great sense of strength in her dancing and the piece asked for her to turn off that strength a little bit in order to access softness. Her part in the dance was similar to that of a motherly role, while at the same time exhibiting a sense of classy sensuality. Kia very nicely balanced out Paul and Angela, demonstrating Paul's intensity and Angela's softness.

Angela Bergamo

Angela dances with so much passion that one can feel it in the extension of her pointer finger. I asked Angela to be a part of my piece because I knew she would be dedicated to embodying the storyline. Her dancing is very honest, as is her personality. I admire her for her beautifully warm heart as did the rest of my cast. I knew she would be open and willing to sharing an encounter with others while speaking my intended story. Her versatility is fantastic as her technique is as fabulous as her ability to improvise. She brought youthfulness to the dance, as well as a feeling of innocence. Angela's role in the dance served as a balance between Paul and Rebecca, encompassing Paul's attention to detail and Rebecca's subtle power.

Paul Vickers

Paul was essential to my dance because he was the only one of the male dancers I could see truly embodying my 88 year old uncle. Paul attacks movement to his fullest potential, feeling the sensation fully throughout his body. His sense of control is amazing and the emotion he pours into his movement is even more beautiful. There is a purposeful intention behind everything he does and that ability was perfect for the element of storytelling that I wanted to

bring into my piece. He is extremely interested in meticulous details, and these details became some of the most vital components of my piece. Though he is a very strong dancer, he was able to portray the movement of an old person stricken with weakness and old age. Paul acted as a middleman between Rebecca and Kia, bringing Rebecca's subtlety together with Kia's force.

Rebecca Diab

Rebecca has a sort of wisdom in her dancing that is difficult to find in someone her age. Her technique is impeccable, but her emotion connection to movement is even stronger. She is very patient and takes time to make real discoveries in her dancing. This piece challenged her to take the time to reach through and beyond each and every movement, and she accepted the challenge wonderfully. Her movement itself subtly gives off an emotional undertone, thus she does not necessarily need to over-emote in her face, she just allows her body to do the talking. This was perfect for my piece as she was able to speak the story of memory loss simply through her movement quality. She acted as a balance between Angela and Kia, while her dancing displayed Angela's grace as well as Kia's strength.

The Dancers as a Whole

Together my dancers formed a connection that was precious and essential to the dance. Through the rehearsal and performance process, I asked them to share an experience with each other each time the dance was danced. Although the intent and story behind this experience remained constant, I allowed them the freedom to enjoy a slightly different experience each night. I think the honesty between the four of my dancers is what made my piece so utterly human. Each of them displayed a trait that complimented another, and together they formed a beautiful family.

D. THE MUSIC

My mentor, Holly Johnston, first gave me the idea of working with age specific music in the portrayal of my piece. Before her suggestion, I was looking at instrumental pieces that encompassed the quality of longing and sadness through use of space, layers, and asymmetry. Though the songs I had in mind were beautiful, they were not doing the job of further progressing my thematic intent.

Our goal was to find a song that was specific of that 1940s-esq time period, without being too cliché about it. I thought about songs such as "Moonlight Serenade" by Glenn Miller and "I'm Yours" as well as "I'll be Seeing You" by Billie Holiday. Yes, these songs did define the very specific time period that I was targeting in my story, but they did not speak the words that were in any way relevant with my theme. I listened to the Louis Armstrong version of "La Vie en Rose" and liked the vibe it was giving off, but the voice was a little overpowering in comparison with the movement.

In a meeting, Holly suggested that I take a listen to the original version of "La Vie en Rose" by Édith Piaf. I instantly fell in love with the beauty of her voice. The way her voice reverberated so elegantly around those French words gave me goose bumps and sent me back into the time period in which the song was made. Piaf popularized the song composed by Louis Gugliemi in 1946. It literally translates to "My life in pink" and gives off a deep feeling of nostalgia as its lyrics further describe a time of young love that makes one feel the more alive than ever before. She sings with joy loveliness about her life was seen through rosy hues as this love enters her heart. Thus, I came to the conclusion that this song in its entirety would properly reflect the visitation and revival of an old memory, taking my dancers back into that 1940s time period.

"La Vie en Rose" in its full body was preceded by the sound of a record spinning on an old turntable. This sound gradually increased in volume through David's sound design of a subtle crescendo. Within these two minutes of the record spinning sound, he inserted moments when small fragments of "La Vie en Rose" would echo in the background, almost as if in a distant echo. The echoing blips of the song began as simply instrumental, then gradually progressed to incorporate voice. By doing this, I was hoping to create a feeling similar to having flashbacks, where small portions of old memories are revoked, therefore stimulating the memory to come about in its full bodied form.

With the whole song is finally introduced, the memory became reality. Figuratively speaking, the vivaciousness of this song took them out of their fragile old bodies back into their younger selves, at the time when the specific memory was made. This brought about a change of mood and lightened the spirit of the dance, as they were able to again experience a time in their lives when they were at their most excellent.

With the conclusion of the song came the conclusion of the memory. This called for another change in intention as the dancers faded out of the memory as marked by the repetition of the turntable sound at the culmination of "La Vie en Rose." The sound of the turntables faded into a diminuendo as the dance, the memory, and the experience between my dancers was punctuated by a proper closing.

E. The Lighting

The lighting of the piece was essential to its thematic buildup and the overall meaning. My mentor Holly Johnston suggested the lighting pattern to me and thereafter I took it upon myself to carefully design and construct a very specific map of how I wanted the lights to compliment my dance, in relation to musicality and spacing. The lights acted as a huge component of my dance, which with played with the sensory experience of both the dancers and audience.

The dance began in total darkness after the curtain was drawn up. The music began exactly when the music was started. The first four lighting cues were all singular spotlights that spilled pools of light onto my dancers, revealing them one at a time. The first spotlight cue took seventeen seconds to come to full and seventeen seconds to go back down into darkness. This first spotlight shone on the downstage right corner of the stage revealing Rebecca on the ground. The second spotlight came in at 46 seconds took a four count to come to full, quickly vanishing directly after. This spotlight shone on the upstage right corner where Angela was dancing. The third spotlight came in at 56 seconds, taking three counts to come up on Paul in the upstage right corner. This spotlight remained lit as the final spotlight came up on the downstage left corner on Kia at one minute, 30 seconds.

These dual spotlights spilled a small amount of light onto the other two dancers who would have otherwise been in darkness. At two minutes, "La Vie en Rose" began and the entire stage was lit up. I used Gel 99 for the sidelights, which was a light amber color, keeping my dancers looking very natural and human. My lighting designer added a few lights from above as well as a very light blue color to the cyc to give of the feeling of being in a dream. This lighting design remained for the majority of my dance.

During the middle of this 'dream-like' phase, I wanted to foreshadow what was going to happen as well as reflect upon information that I had already presented through the use of a fifth spotlight. There is a section of my piece when all of my dancers finally come together to dance in sync. It is the first time they are all physically together in relation to spacing, and the first time they dance in unison. At this point, I wanted to go back to the isolation that comes with memory loss as illustrated in the opening of my dance with the solos. Paul's spotlight lit the stage as the rest of the lights were extinguished, illustrating emptiness. My dancers reacted to this phenomenon of emptiness by quickly looking and moving toward the spotlight almost as if gasping, then returning to their positions with the relighting of the whole stage.

The lights began to fade with the culmination of "La Vie en Rose," taking almost a full 45 seconds to slowly leave my dancers in complete darkness. This left the audience with an image of the three women in the upstage right corner of the stage while Paul was left alone, almost defeated by this unstoppable deterioration of memory. The extinguishment of the lights marked his inability to stay in the memory, thus illustrating the devastation of dementia.

F. COSTUMES

At first, I had a difficult time deciding what I wanted the costumes for this dance to be. I began with an idea of identical short baby doll dresses, but they were not age appropriate for the piece. Instead, I decided to touch upon my dancers' individuality and get them dresses that were 1940s-esq in design but unique to each of my dancers' body type. It was somewhat challenging because all of my dancers were so small, but eventually I found costumes that fit the piece perfectly.

For Kia, I ordered a collared button up royal blue polka dot dress from Urban Outfitter's online store. It complimented her muscular body beautifully and brought some softness to her natural curves. It was made of a thin silk fabric that moved very nicely along with her. Also from Urban Outfitters, I bought Angela an open backed navy blue and red striped dress that was slim fitting and made her look older than she does naturally. The dress had a high neck and a full skirt that brought a little more body to her thin figure. I went to a vintage store in West Hollywood to get Rebecca's burgundy and white polka dot dress. It was a hater top neck with an open back and a long skirt. This made her small yet muscular frame look a little more feminine and the fabric draped nicely upon her body. Paul wore his own dark grey fitted pants, a pale yellow thin striped dress shirt, and a wool brown, red, and green striped vest. This gave more fullness to his small body type and made him look like an old man.

I curled each of my female dancers' hair in ringlets with the use of hairspray and a curling iron and pinned their bangs back away from their face. They wore simple makeup punctuated with bright red lipstick to display beautiful boldness of youth. Paul pushed his hair into a comb over, again displaying 1940s style.



G. PUBLICITY

After my dance made it into the student dance concert, *Converge*, I joined the publicity committee, which was in charge of advertising, in turn getting people to come to the show to see the students' hard work. This year, the three forms of advertisement we used for publicity included posters and postcards that were dispersed among campus, a live preview of the concert at convo, and pre-ticket sales.

Many posters were hung around the campus a few weeks before the show's opening night. They were hung in popular buildings such as the library, St. Rob's, and University Hall. As the days drew nearer, many students passed out small postcards advertising the concert at convo and during passing time. I also decided to announce to my non-dance department classes that the show was coming up and that tickets were available and that my fellow students could purchase tickets directly from me.

One of the most successful and fun parts of publicity was the preview at convo. I asked my cast members as well as fellow dance majors to meet up with us at convo and dance on the cement and the grass, showing off sneak-peaks of the show. This seemed to draw a large crowd as people became interested in what we were doing and why. A lot of tickets were sold this way and it led us to a few sold out nights.

Pre-ticket sales were very helpful this year. Each choreographer was given five tickets to sell for various nights. I actually ended up running out of tickets and taking other choreographers' spare tickets. This was an organized way to make sure that we would have a great audience for the show we worked so hard to produce. I felt that we as a dancer student body could have done fundraising, seeing as nothing was done this year to raise money for the concert. If we had done fundraising, we could have publicized the show even more, leading to an even larger audience of a wider demographic.

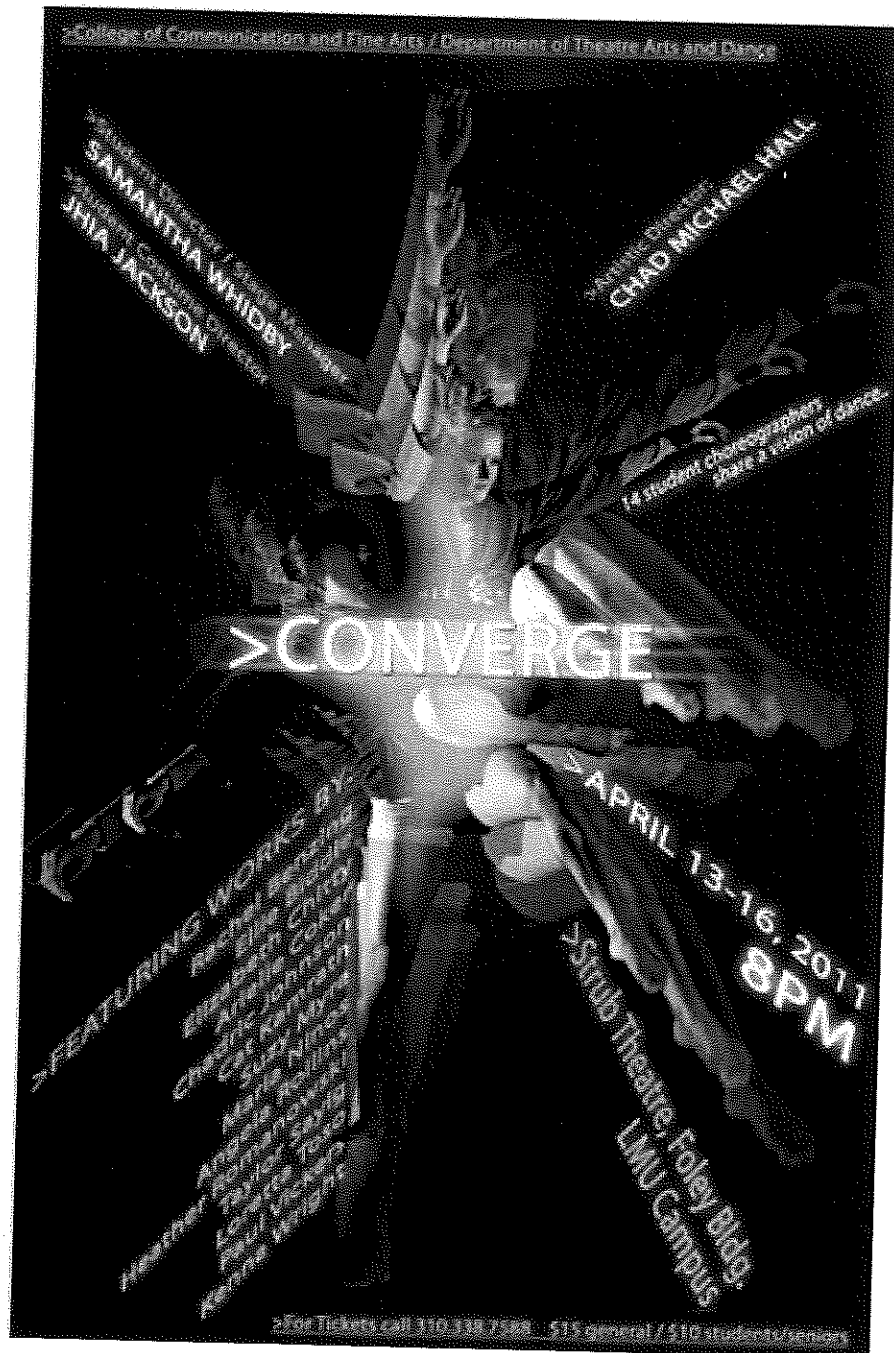
H. POST CONCERT REFLECTION & ANALYSIS

Looking back to the end of last year and beginning of this year when my ideas for a senior thesis were nothing more than ideas, I cannot believe where this choreographic journey has landed me. I have gained so much joy in watching this vision slowly but surely turn into a reality. I gain even more pleasure in the culmination of this experience because someone with whom I am very close inspired it.

I started off motivated with my vision, but easily frustrated when the desired outcome was not immediately achieved. I expected this journey to completion to be a lot less rocky than it actually was. I became discouraged easily, but it was the beautiful work and eagerness of my dancers that kept me pushing on when that discouragement set in. I am so happy that I stuck with my original vision and pursued that seemingly impossible goal because attaining it made it that much more rewarding in the end.

Reflecting back upon the student concert experience makes me beam with happiness because it was during those performances that my dancers illustrated my full vision. It was only after all of the elements came together that I was able to see resolution and clarity in my dance. Without the element of lighting, or costuming, or musicality the piece simply would not make sense. After all of this came together and I was able to confidently call the piece complete, my dancers were able to experience the piece rather than just dance it. I could see in their performance the meticulous details that made it complete and uniquely beautiful.

Looking back, I don't think I would have changed anything about my process because I would be afraid that it would fail to bring me to the place I eventually ended up. Although I did make some mistakes and endure some obstacles along the way, it was only from those challenges I was able to learn about myself as a choreographer and artist.



II. DANCE PERSPECTIVES

A. REFLECTION

Courses taken at Western Michigan University

Principles of Movement

- We got to know each other as the group of incoming freshman and focused on developing a sense of unity and togetherness.
- We learned about different ways to move the body and how to draw inspiration from everyday items, feelings, or habits.
- We learned how to develop a single motion into a variation of different movements that shift weight, take up space, and change dynamic.
- We learned how to step out of the box and be willing to look silly in order to explore new ways of moving.
- We learned the importance of connection in the body and the use of core to initiate movement instead of flailing about unintentionally.

Modern 1/2

- We learned how to become one with the floor.
- We learned how to let go of turnout and proper ballet technique in order to achieve a strong parallel position in the feet and legs.
- We learned how to warm up the body using weight into the ground in floor work and to keep the spine in a neutral, functional position.
- We learned about the different aesthetic styles of Paul Taylor, Martha Graham, and Lester Horton.
- We learned how to cover a maximum amount of space through the use of pile and core initiation.

Ballet 1

- Coming from a competition studio that did not give me strong technical training, I learned that I needed to completely restructure and rebuild my ballet technique.
- I learned how to take my lower back out of hyperextension and had to over exaggerate and almost move my spine into flexion in order to gain the feeling of a neutral pelvis.
- I learned to close my ribs in order to establish a connection between my ribs and pelvis.
- I learned how to control my arms by anchoring my shoulders down and controlling them from my upper back.
- I learned how to articulate through my feet moving from the phalanges to the metatarsals.
- I learned how to make my movement more crisp and clear and to maximize positions of the body and make them more defined.

Jazz 1

- I learned how to articulate movement and make movement sharp in my body in warm up and across the floor exercises.
- We focused a lot on isolations of the arms, shoulders, and ribs.
- We built muscle in our bodies by practicing repetitive strengthening exercises that got increasingly more difficult as time passed.
- We increased flexibility by stretching the muscles and maximizing mobility of the joints.
- We worked on the technical aspects of exercises such as turns, battements, jumps, and transition steps.
- We worked on our ability to pick up choreography by learning "quick studies" in a variation of aesthetic styles.

Fundamentals of Dance Composition

- We learned about different methods of composing, creating, and choreographing movement.

- We learned about the art of crafting dances and the variation of dynamics, spatial capacity, level changes, body facings, and shape quality.
- We learned about the use of motif and the repetition of the motif in various ways.
- We learned about choreographing movement to music and how the qualities of movement and music correlate.
- We learned our own specific styles and what kind of movers we were, and then had to compose a dance that demonstrated opposite qualities of the ones we preferred.

Roots of Jazz

- We learned about the foundations of dance, and how it originated in ethnic or cultural dance.
- We learned about the timeline of dance, mainly focusing on the roots of jazz, partner dance, and social dance.
- We experienced what it was like to dance with different partners every week and learned about the history of many kinds of social dance.
- We practiced performing these partner and ballroom dances and dressed the part in costumes to get into the true character of the dancer we were pretending to be.
- We learned the basic technique of the fox trot, quick step, salsa, lindy hop, tango, and waltz.

Music Fundamentals for Dance

- We learned about the composition of musical notation and the different kinds of notes.
- We learned about beats, measure, and time signature.
- We learned about the different kinds of instruments and practiced being able to recognize them in music.
- We learned about different composers and the history of music and the time periods from which they were relevant.
- We learned about classical historical dance theatre and the musicians present in that era of dance.

Freshman Performance Class

- We learned about the elements of performance in a college setting.
- We were taught how to apply proper stage make up and the reasons why certain techniques were important in different performance scenarios.
- We took field trips to visit the various stages around our campus in which we might have to opportunity to perform.
- We learned about costume design and got to take part in the creation of our costume that we would later perform in.
- We learned a three part piece and got to take part in the fall faculty concert and applied all of the knowledge we learned in the class.

Jazz 2/3

- This jazz class focused on technical precision and ownership of material.
- We learned how to master the warm up given to us that we would repeat every day, emphasizing stretch and growth.
- We learned about how to adapt to and master different styles of jazz, hip hop, lyrical, musical theatre, and contemporary dance.
- We learned about the style of Bob Fosse and learned a combination to one of his famous pieces of work.
- We were privileged to be able to take class from several different guest artists and had to adapt to all of their unique styles.

Dance Touring Group

- We were given an assignment to choreograph movement to a piece of music and had the opportunity to perform it in front of our peers and eventually to a wide range of audience members when we toured.
- We learned how to dance with various kinds of props and experimented with a kind of theatrical performance where we were required to get in touch with our acting skills.
- We learned about how to teach dance to children studying dance in elementary and high school settings.
- We learned about how to perform in small and large spaces and how to set up, strike, and light a smaller venue.
- We learned about what it was like to take class at studios like Hubbard Street in Chicago and how to apply the knowledge we learned there to our monthly performances.

Courses taken at Loyola Marymount University

Fundamentals of Dance Composition

- We learned about how to experiment with movement through the embodiment of everyday objects and feelings.
- We learned about how to create a dance drawing inspiration from pictures of statues and creating a storyline out of the pictures.
- We learned about the importance of motif and how to use it in order to bring structure to a dance.
- We learned about how to create a dance with a partner and work with others who have different creative ideas than those of our own.
- We learned about how to write and talk about dance in an intelligent and constructive manner that requires observation and interpretation.

Laban Movement Analysis

- We learned about Laban notation and how to physically write out dance movement.
- We learned about the history of Laban, where he drew inspirations, when his influence began, and how his creation affected the dance world.
- We learned about ways to draw inspiration from our environment and found out that everything dances.
- We learned how to talk through our dances and describe in Laban terminology the specific actions we were performing.
- We learned about the different effort, time, space, and weight qualities and how to incorporate them to movement and use them to make that movement dynamically interesting.

Ballet 3/4

- We learned how to recognize and evaluate the importance of proper alignment and placement in ballet technique.
- We learned about how to recognize the body as a whole that moves through space through core initiation.
- We learned about how to recognize body placement internally and to make fine adjustments in order to achieve better technical placement.
- We learned how to develop a strong mind and body connection through being able to pick up combinations at the barre and center floor at a quick pace.
- We learned about the importance of musicality and practiced moving to music with different time signatures.

Modern 4

- We learned how to become grounded into the floor and use the whole body as a point of connection to the earth.
- We learned about the importance of breath and how it is essential to all movement.
- We learned about the importance of musicality and were given the freedom to play around with timing and mold movement to fit said timing.
- We learned about different ways to improvise and were given information about using different points of initiation.
- We developed a great deal of strength and learned the importance of control in gym days.
- We learned that it was beneficial to get over the fear of failing and aim for a more high-energy, yet safe, way of dancing.

Jazz 5

- We learned how to improve on the technical execution of movement.
- We were challenged to learn at a fast pace and be able to pick up on minute details while at the same time dancing the combo at performance quality.
- We looked deeper into understanding the fundamentals of jazz dance and worked to build flexibility, strength and stamina.
- We learned to approach movement with a different mental and physical mindset.
- We focused on adapting to the ever-changing world of contemporary commercial dance while still maintaining strong jazz technique.

To Dance is Human

- We learned about ourselves in the assignment such as the cultural markers, basket, and life changing story.
- We learned about different ethnicities and the importance dance plays in all cultures.
- We learned about each other through the sharing of stories and through it, we gained a feeling of comfort and trust.
- We were fed knowledge through the visitation of guest speakers.
- We further expanded our experience of writing about dance and other human interactive arts.

Dance Styles & Forms

- We learned about Merce Cunningham and his use of spontaneity in his chance procedures.
- We learned about what it was like to work with others and create a dance through the use of a game chance procedure.
- We learned about musicality with the help of David and were asked to make a dance that accurately demonstrated and embodied the nature of the piece of music.
- We learned about what it was like to compose a full length duet with a partner of our choice.
- We learned more about the different elements of dance and why they were so important in the art of composition and creation.

History of Dance Theatre

- We learned about the origin of dance in ethnical and cultural social dance and why it was so important to politics and other social issues.
- We learned about the evolution of ballet from the Romantic, to the Ballets Russes, to the Classical era.
- We learned about the key players in the development of modern dance and how their methods of dance varied stylistically.
- We learned about the emergence of improvisation and how it sprouted as a social movement.

- We learned about musical theatre, tap, and jazz and their individual histories.
- We learned about one specific dancer or form of dance when we were asked to write a final paper on said topic.

Kinesiology for Dancers 1

- We learned how to view the body as a form of architecture regarding the structure of the skeleton and the muscles which move it.
- We learned about the function of the cell, the relationships between cells, and the specific functions of each type of cell within the body.
- We learned about the components of the skeletal system including cartilage, bone, and bone maintenance.
- We learned about the components of the muscular system and the relationship between the muscular system, skeletal system, and the nervous system.
- We learned about the function and anatomy of the circulatory system, cardiovascular system, and the heart.
- We learned about the nervous system including the relationship between the central and peripheral nervous system.
- We learned about the influence of stress, nutrition, environment and lifestyle on the cells of the body and the body as a whole.

Kinesiology for Dancers 2

- We developed a further understanding of kinesiological ideas and anatomical fact, which we could relate to dance based theory.
- We learned to identify specific bones and muscle groups within the body such as the pelvis, knee, hip, patellofemoral joints, ankle, foot, and both lower and upper extremities.
- We learned about major regions and functions of the body with particular attention to the spine and pelvis.
- We gained a greater understanding of the different types of joints within the body and how they function and move.
- We learned about importance of taking care of our own bodies with the idea of longevity for our dance careers in mind.
- Considering longevity, we created a personal conditioning program in which to practice in conjunction with our dance practice to keep our bodies strengthened and flexible.
- We cultivated a knowledge of common dance injuries and how to prevent them through correct alignment and awareness of the body's placement.

Principles of Teaching Dance

- We learned about the requirements needed to teach arts in a California high school, and also became familiar with the National Standards for Dance guidelines.
- We learned how to create a lesson plan and were able to practice teaching these lesson plans to our peers.
- We experienced first hand what it was like to be in charge of a class and had to present lessons that challenged and enlightened our 'students.'
- We learned about the different career options we have as dancers and more specifically, as dance teachers of children who may not be privileged
- We learned how to make a professional resume displaying our experiences as students, performers, and educators.

Modern 5

- We learned about the four coretils and how to fill and expand those areas in the body.
- We learned about the connection between the coretils and how they work together to create traction in the body, initiating and driving movement.

- We learned about converging and diverging in the body and using the floor to give biofeedback
- We learned about the difference between muscle driven movement and skeletal driven movement, and emphasized lining up our skeletons in the most functional positions in order to allow for bone on bone contact, turning our muscles system off disallowing it from overworking.
- We learned about having presence in classroom work and how to apply that kind of presence in an audition setting.
- We learned how to look one another in the eye and how to speak without saying anything. We learned how to trust one another and learned how to see beautiful truth in dancing.

Jazz 6

- We learned how to treat each classroom experience as a performance experience.
- We learned how to lengthen through movement and how to complete lines in both slow and quick movement phrases.
- We learned about how to adjust to different guest teachers and how to take away information from their lessons, applying it to ourselves but not letting it dominate in other jazz classes.
- We learned about how to dress, act, and look the part of the role we wanted to achieve.
- We discovered that the classroom is the time to take chances and mess up because if we don't push ourselves to our full potential in class, we won't know how to reach that full potential in an audition.
- We learned about how to write thoughtfully about our experience in class as well as our experience outside of class through the utilization of a journal as a tool.

Ballet 5

- We learned how to let go of worry and fear in our dancing, instead trusting the intelligence of our own carefully trained bodies.
- We learned about viewing challenging parts of class as 'fun' instead of 'hard'—we learned how to change our mindset going into and during class in order to get the most rewarding experience out of our classroom time.
- We learned that simply smiling when something seems very difficult makes it easier.
- We learned how to utilize breath in movement and found out how it makes the movement lighter.
- We learned how to listen to the music in order to find space between the notes in turn finding space within our dancing.
- We learned about the difference between seriousness and sincerity in dancing and in everyday life.

Yoga for Dancers

- We learned about the principles and technique of GST and how to apply them to yoga practice.
- We learned about the importance of 'work'
- We learned about the names and positions that make up a Vinyasa flow.
- We learned about the differences between body functions of flexing and hinging.
- We learned restorative poses and how to use them to better our bodies.
- We learned about how to keep working through positions instead of resting.
- We learned about how to initiate movement from the inside out and how to initiate our movement from deep muscle intelligence.

- We learned the proper functionality of our muscles and how to apply that functionality in the correct way.

Monday Jazz

- We learned how to work together with other dancers in discovery and learning.
- We learned how to pick out specific areas of our dancing to focus on.
- We learned that value of videotaping and how it reflects our individual progression throughout the course of the semester.
- We gained very personal one on one insight regarding what we could improve upon in class.
- We all improved on specific areas of dance as picked out in the beginning of the semester and worked on over the course of a few months.
- We dove deep into reflection of our progression when we were asked to write about the different elements of class and how they affected each and every one of us on a personal scale.

Friday Workshop

- We learned the philosophy and technique of Grace Somatomorphic Technique (GST).
- We learned about the four coretiles in the body and their relation to each other.
- We learned about applying traction in our muscles system and convergence and divergence in our skeletal systems
- We learned therapeutic and restorative exercises for the body.

B. Essay

The legendary Martha Graham once defined dance as the "hidden language of the soul." Dance is a form of communication that incorporates the engagement of the body, spirit, and mind. The art of movement is present in and essential to the development and survival of human beings. It is among one of the most intrinsic and innate areas of study, yet art tends to receive less attention and value than other academic subjects. Through dance, dancing, and speaking and writing about dance, humans are able to become more effective learners; cognitively, physically and creatively.

According to dance educator and scholar Anne Green Gilbert, "Most children are born with the neurons to speak any language, but because of their environment, certain synapses are pruned and they only speak the words they hear daily."¹ In viewing dance as one of these possible languages, Gilbert makes it clear that without exposure to movement, a child's brain is working under its maximum capability, and is perhaps under developing. Gilbert further explains the development of the brain in her article, *Brain-Compatible Dance Education*.

All areas of the brain must work in an integrated way for the brain and body to fully function. A strong lower brain and mid brain, which develop primarily through sensory and motor activities in the first years of life are vitally important for overall brain function. Without this coordination, basic processing that our lower brain handles automatically has to be conducted by our upper brain. This makes sensory processing much more awkward and difficult. The brain is programmed to develop in stages within a certain sequence. When that sequence is disrupted and stages are missed, the brain must compensate. As the brain develops, gaps cause

problems in processing information, which can compromise cognitive function. By understanding the important work of each part of the brain we realize the value of all parts working in harmony.² Gilbert goes on to further explain in detail the functionality of the three different sections of the brain and justifies that the lower, mid, and upper brain are all working when the body is moving.

The lower brain deals with unconscious functions of the body and holds nerve nets that link senses with muscle movement and are encoded with sensory-motor patterns. This is where the physical connection between mind and body movement takes place. The mid brain is the emotional part of the brain that deals with conscious and unconscious thought processes. It is linked to the lower brain and causes the body to elicit physical signs of emotion. The mid brain is also connected to the upper brain, where the emotions and movement are cognitively processed. Gilbert states, "In order to learn, we must first have a sensory experience, then reflect and make connections. Finally, we must take action based on experience."³

The information Gilbert presents makes it clear that a fully functioning body leads to a fully functioning brain. Dance and the promotion of dance education is one way to ensure that children are able to fully exercise and expand all parts of the brain. A fully functioning brain will therefore lead to more efficient learning patterns. The development of effective learning patterns give children the ability to absorb and contain more knowledge causing them to become more intelligent human beings.

There is also a profound connection between dancing and the feedback one receives at its conclusion. According to Gilbert, the brain needs positive, opportune, meaningful, and

descriptive feedback in order to further grow and develop.⁴ One way to achieve this is to ask students to speak to each other about what they observe and feel after acting as a performer or an audience member. When words are thoughtfully vocally exchanged between two or more individuals, the insubstantial feelings become more concrete. This motivates students to become more emotionally engaged which then leads to the desire to come to class, eventually causing students to learn more and remember longer.

Gilbert states, "Feedback may be expressed through positive words from a teacher or peer; from smiles and direct eye contact... The intrinsic rewards of achievement, as well as teacher and classmate appreciation, are far more meaningful than external prizes of treats and trophies."⁵ Feedback like this in such an enriched learning environment allows for audience members to participate as much as performers in that he or she is able to bring to the table his or her unique opinion. In this vocal exchange of constructive criticism, both parties (observers and dancers) are equal participants; intellectually and emotionally involved in the experience.

One issue in today's society that has rendered the arts unimportant is the disconnection between mental processes and physical exercise. Howard Gardner discusses this phenomenon in his book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*.

There has been a radical disjunction in our recent cultural tradition between the activities of reasoning, on one hand, and the activities of the manifestly physical part of our nature, as epitomized by our bodies, on the other. This divorce between the "mental" and "physical" has not infrequently been coupled with a notion that what we do with our bodies is somehow less privileged, less special, than those problem-solving routines

carried out chiefly through the use of language, logic, or some other relatively abstract symbolic system.⁶

Gardner states that this separation between the physical and mental is not typically present in other cultures.

Because American society is so technologically driven and aimed toward financial rather than creative or athletic success, many children spend hours in front of a television instead of exercising their bodies as means of entertainment, while in the meantime, their parents are spending the same amount of time at a desk staring at a computer screen. Though, as Gilbert discussed earlier, the use of the body and the exploitation of other cognitive powers is very closely linked.⁷ In recent years, psychologists have come to recognize this deep connection and have stressed its importance.

Since the significance of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence has begun to gain more attention, educators and researchers have begun to look at why and how movement and the other arts change the learning experience. The “why” and “how” are broken down and examined in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, a document created by The Arts Education Partnership and The President’s Committee on The Arts and The Humanities, edited by Edward B. Fiske.

Two of the most significant reasons why the arts change the learning experience are because they reach students who are not otherwise being reached and in ways that they are not otherwise being reached. This is important for students who seem to be disengaged from the learning experience due to lack of motivation or the fact that he or she belongs to a different

learning style than the one usually utilized. Many of the children that do not fit into this norm and seem to be disengaged are positively affected by the introduction of art and the different kind of learning style it requires.

The arts have the power to connect students to themselves and each other by creating a personal, as well as social experience. Art allows for self-expression in that it presents students with vague outline that they can fill with their own creative concoctions. In art, there is no right or wrong, there is only interpretation. In allowing students to work together and observe each other's creations, the young artists are exposed to many different understandings of the given project. This promotes optimism and open-mindedness and merely fuels the fire of their inventive spirits.

This encouragement of creativity can transform a school setting into a place of divine discovery. This idea of constant invention and exploration presents limitless potential for both students who struggle in an academic setting and those who are otherwise successful. In fact, the arts can offer a chance of unlimited challenge that pertains to a student's transition from a school setting into the "real world." The arts push for excellence of expression and never-ending investigation, thus allowing for infinite personal growth.⁸

According to a *Habits of Mind* Journal that promotes the basic skills needed for success in the workplace, there are several ways in which dance education can provide opportunities for growth in addition to the reasons why art education is important, as previously mentioned. These habits that can be exemplified by dance education include: persisting, managing impulsivity, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly, thinking about thinking, striving for

accuracy, questioning and posing problems, applying past knowledge to new situations, thinking and communicating with clarity and precision, gathering data through all senses, creating, imagining, innovating, responding with wonderment and awe, taking responsible risks, finding humor, thinking interdependently, and remaining open to continuous learning.⁹ These simple habits of mind can assist students not only in the creative process, but also in everyday life in the present and in the future. These physical and mental states into which the dancers are required to enter are stimulating to the education of the whole person, mind, body and spirit. When a student is constantly asked to fully engage his or herself in this kind of intense stimulation, the maturing process becomes more effective and with a deeper level of understanding.

Although much emphasis has been placed on the act of moving and actually dancing, it is still vital for students to be able to discuss dance verbally and in writing. This brings back dance's relationship to language and how it can be described as a form of expression. It is important for a student to be able to put into words what he or she experiences through the art of movement. In William J. Moody's article about the kinesthetic role in art, he discusses the importance of using multiple languages to reflect upon artwork and how it leads to existential insight.

The intelligent act in the experiential world is a holistic act that, in turn, when experienced holistically, results in unifying the artist, the work, and the perceiver.

In the final analysis, it may be summed up by saying that artistic intelligence is

expressed and displayed in a variety of ways and through a variety of forms. The ways are infinite, and the forms are flexible.¹⁰

This way of tying together creative expression through means of performance, reflection, and then description through speaking and writing engages the student in his or her work in a deep and meaningful way.

Moody goes on to emphasize the fusion of language and movement and does so through poetry. Even in describing dance in words, it is interesting how he feels the need to arrange them in an artistic manner:

Words and action merge,
Becoming deed.
Speech and gesture become one;
The word and the flesh are one:
Mouth and hand,
Torso and head,
Heart and mind,
Breath and soul.
All organs of expression,
Orgasmic, organic pathways,
Wholeness in practice and performance,
All into one;
All are one.¹¹

In this arrangement of writing, Moody demonstrates how in poetry, words have to opportunity to achieve a more complex level of literacy and actually cross over the line of writing into the realm of the arts. These arts serve the purpose of creating a real and meaningful learning experience in which the artist's mind, heart and, body is fully engaged. Thus, deep investigation of the arts fosters the maturity of cognitive, social, and personal capabilities.

The learning outcomes of art and movement in a school setting can be life altering in that they allow for more cognitive capabilities, promote endless creativity, and engage students in a physical full body experience. It is vital to the development of human beings to introduce more dancing and speaking and writing about dance into the school system— for it produces more able, optimistic, and ingenious young men and women.

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- 1 Anne G. Gilbert, *Brain-Compatible Dance Education*. (Reston: National Dance Association, 2006), 6.
 - 2 Gilbert, *Education*, 6.
 - 3 Gilbert, *Education*, 9.
 - 4 Gilbert, *Education*, 6.
 - 5 Gilbert, *Education*, 11.
 - 6 Howard E. Gardner, *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 207.
 - 7 Gilbert, *Education*, 6-9.
 - 8 Edward B. Fiske, *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. (Washington DC: The Arts Education Partnership, 1999), 8-9.
 - 9 Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick, *Activating & Engaging Habits of Mind*. (Alexandria: ASCD, 2000), 1-2.
 - 10 William J. Moody, *Artistic Intelligences: Implications for Education*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), 129.
 - 11 Moody, *Artistic Intelligences*, 129.

IV. AESTHETIC STATEMENT

As an artist who is about to end my career as a student, I can say that I have seen a substantial amount of choreographic and performative work. I have played the part of the choreographer and the dancer, the creator and the subject matter, the inventor and the guinea pig. Having these experiences in the fields of both performance and choreography, leaves me with a better sense of what is aesthetically pleasing to me.

The professional work that represents my highest ideals is work that is sincere, full bodied, detail oriented, athletic, and connected. I enjoy the idea of sustainment in dancing and like the alternation between bound and free flow movement. I am drawn to movement that has a purpose and meaning behind it. I prefer depth as opposed to shallowness when it comes to the story line and the motions that illustrate it. Some professional choreographers who I admire include Wade Robson, Justin Giles, Sonya Tayeh, Mike Esperanza, Dana Metz, and Holly Johnston. Each of them in their work maintains a voice that is strictly, unmistakably theirs. This is the goal for any choreographer; to make something that can be recognized by an audience and valued for its uniqueness.

The professional performers who tend to catch my eye are the ones who are so deeply invested in the movement that they almost become a part of it. Confidence is a huge part of makes a dancer stand out, but then again, displaying vulnerability is visually beautiful too. I like to watch performers who are precise, have intention, and know why they are doing each movement. As a performer, one key component to being noticeable in dancing is allowing each movement to hold some kind of purpose that clearly resonates within the soul. The reason why I chose the dancers I did for my piece is because they all beautifully exemplify this notion of putting purpose behind movement. It becomes even more sacred and special when this sense of artistry is natural. Some other students who I think have this characteristic include Shae Stanton,

Charles Roy, and Mackenzey Franklin. When these individuals take the spotlight or claim a piece of floor, spectators know that they are about to get a treat in the form of lovely dancing.

Because I am so interested in the topic of interpersonal relations, the intermingling of relationships in dance is something I highly value. I love to see dancers who execute movement being mindful of the people with whom they are dancing. Meaningful connections in dancing can be as simple as a look or complex as a meticulous piece of contact improv. I love being surprised, so it is no wonder that I love spontaneity in movement as well. This can be evoked by the utilization of improvisation. That being said, I also love complex structure in choreography, especially when the structure plays into the overall thematic purpose of the dance. To gain a little more insight as to how my role models do this, I try to take dance classes from them as frequently as possible.

Some elements of dance that do not speak to me include shallow movement that is performed just for the sake of being performed. I see no value in amazingly complex and difficult movement unless there is some kind of depth to it. A great example of this can be seeing in a lot of high school competition dancing. I despise fakeness in dancing and believe that this plays into the whole mentioning of sincerity. I do not like watching someone who is technically sound, but reveals nothing about him or herself in the movement. Disconnect and lack of genuineness in movement is not appealing to me.

Musicality is very important to me because I think of it as the driving force behind movement. Earlier this year, Tyce DiOrio came in to teach jazz for a few weeks and mentioned something about music that really stuck with me. He told us to become the music, to embody it fully and let it move us. I had never seen music and dance as being so hand-in-hand though I did appreciate musicality. Really listening to and welcoming musicality into one's body allows for a

deeper connection to the music and renders the performer better able to create space and breath in movement. My love for music makes musicality a huge part of what aesthetically pleases me.

Although great technique is so highly emphasized in basic dance training and it brings cleanliness to dance performance, to me it is not the most important driving force. Yes, it is rewarding to watch a dancer with amazing technique move ever so effortlessly through the space, but amazing technique is not a must. I do agree that great technical training allows one's body to understand movement and respond properly to biofeedback, but I think the human quality of dance trumps flawless technique. I usually do find myself drawn into watching dancers who demonstrate well-learned technique, but these dancers do not necessarily touch my heart or move me to tears unless there is some sort of truthful surrender in and to the movement.

Accomplished choreography is important to determining aesthetic value because it allows one to see first hand what works and what does not from a choreographic standpoint. Someone who had a huge impact on my view of choreography is Holly Johnston. Because I was able to meet with her every Friday to discuss my choreography, I became accustomed to what great choreography looked like. The points that we discussed in these meetings were subtle but narrowed down the factors to determining what kind of choreography really spoke to an audience as a whole, but also on a more personal level, to me. After these meetings that helped me to produce choreography that spoke a clear story line and message, I was left with a much better understanding of what made a work successful or not successful. It wasn't until after having these meetings that I was able to realize that choreography is not just the dancing portion of a work, but rather the entire overall design and execution as well.

To a piece, I think it is important for a dancer to bring their entire selves. Being selected to be in a work opens the door to opportunity, allowing the dancer to make a difference in the

form of performance and execution of a dance. A dancer needs to be mindful of the choreographer's preferences, the other dancers in the piece, and the target audience. It is necessary for a dancer to almost climb into a choreographer's brain and look at the piece from their creative perspective. A dancer also must take the time to figure out what it is he or she needs to do in order to exemplify the movement as it was intended. A dancer should be involved in knowing the intention behind the movement and taking it upon themselves to display that knowledge. Though a dancer does need to commit his or herself to the movement, it needs to be in moderation, to the choreographer's liking. It is safe for a dancer to have an experience in the form of performing dance and a choreographer will let a dancer know if it is too overly expressive. It is a dancer's responsibility to bring their best work to a piece because it becomes their duty to fulfill and soar above a choreographer's expectations.

My aesthetic preferences range everywhere from appreciating beautiful lines to appreciating honesty in one glance. I appreciate the integration of humanity and artistry in movement. I appreciate meaningful connections between dancers, yet I also love deeply invested solo work. I love variety in quality of movement, utilization of space, and connection to music. The choreographic process has allowed me to discover what I value as a creator as well as a performer. This knowledge and discovery is helpful to my future career as an artist.

V. SENIOR SHOWCASE

SENIOR SHOWCASE SCRIPT

Memory loss is a phenomenon with which we are all vaguely familiar. Small blips of forgetfulness happen to us on a day-to-day basis whether it's forgetting someone's name or forgetting to do a homework assignment. Most of the time, a stimulus ignites a small light bulb in our mind and we are able to once again grasp a hold of the lost thought. But what if memory loss became something that we could no longer control? What if those familiar stimuli that always seemed to light the way to remembrance could no longer penetrate the darkness? What happens to a person when memory loss ceases to be a rare but annoying habit and starts becoming a real life challenge? I began taking these questions into consideration after one of my close relatives started to display the beginning stages of dementia.

My name is Taylor Sayig and I created a choreographic piece about the unstoppable hurricane of memory loss that sometimes accompanies old age, as demonstrated by my 88 year old great Uncle Eddie. The fact that this entire creative project was motivated by someone who holds a special place in my heart rendered it a very personal experience for me.

I chose to work choreographically because I wanted to produce something that was entirely original and completely mine. This was the first time in which I was not the subject of my own work. I was interested in creating movement on bodies other than mine, and entrusted my four brilliant dancers with a narrative that was very near and dear to my soul. It became my goal to display my uncle's experience of irreversible memory loss, allowing the piece to act as a tribute to his amazing life "in rosy hues." Developing a piece that could illustrate the feeling of dementia took a lot of emotional investment as well as meticulous research as I aimed to generate movement that tapped into the real human experience of loss.

Story telling was incorporated into my dance's structure to give it a humanistic feel. Rather than setting difficult intricate movement, it was my goal to allow my dancers to have an encounter with each other while at the same time speaking my intended story. Every detail about the piece was essential to the work: the title, the music, the lighting, the costumes, and the connection between the dancers all contributed to its thematic purpose. Certain aspects of my uncle's life and my relationship with him became intertwined in the movement while the other details further exemplified the narrative.

The title, *Ne M'Oubliez Pas* is French for "forget me not." The music, *La Vie en Rose*, so beautifully sung by Edith Piaf discusses in its lyrics a feeling of nostalgia as they reflect upon the celebration of youth and love. I thought the French motif was fitting since my uncle lived for a short while in France when he was around my age. The music was edited and designed by David Kariganis to give off a sense of distance as it slowly grew louder and fuller, going from a repetitive echo to a full bodied portrayal of the song in its entirety. The lighting was very specifically designed to periodically come up in spotlights that spilled pools of light onto the stage, revealing my dancers one at a time. The stage lit up in synchronization with the music representing the revival of a memory. My dancers dressed in 1940s-esq attire and looked the part of four individuals captured from inside a long lost photograph. With all of these elements in collaboration, my vision was appropriately displayed at *Converge*, the Student Dance Concert.

From this experience, I learned that it takes a lot of time, emotional investment, physical trials, and fresh starts before arriving at a place of clarity, contentment, and understanding. Though I encountered challenges along the way, I was eventually able to present an aesthetic work that was as nostalgic as a bittersweet memory. Through movement I was able to gain a better understanding of what it would be like to suffer from an elderly mind. The entire experience gave me insight to who I am as an artist and furthermore, as a human being.

SENIOR REFLECTION

MY NAME IS TAYLOR DANIELLE SAYIG AND I AM FROM LIVONIA, MICHIGAN. GROWING UP IN THE MIDWEST WAS AN EXPERIENCE UPON WHICH I NEVER PLACED MUCH VALUE UNTIL I MOVED 2,300 MILES WEST OF THE PLACE I WILL FOREVER CALL HOME. MY CHILDHOOD WAS A WONDERFUL ONE FULL OF LAUGHTER, LOVE, AND LESSONS LEARNED. ONE SMALL, YET SIGNIFICANT COMPONENT OF MY CHILDHOOD THAT I WILL NEVER FORGET IS MY MOM'S VOICE EVERY DAY BEFORE I LEFT FOR SCHOOL SAYING, "WORK HARD AND BE NICE TO EVERYONE." IT IS REMARKABLE WHAT A FEW SIMPLE WORDS CAN DO, AS THEY ARE STILL THE ONES THAT ECHO IN MY HEAD. AS I LOOK BACK ON MY UPBRINGING, I REALIZE THAT IT WAS NOT THE PLACE IN WHICH I WAS RAISED THAT SHAPED ME INTO WHO I AM, BUT RATHER, THE PEOPLE. I HAVE BEEN SO EXTREMELY BLESSED TO BE SURROUNDED BY AMAZING HUMAN BEINGS IN THE FORM OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THROUGH MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, I HAVE LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPANIONSHIP, LOYALTY, FORGIVENESS, AND LOVE. I COULD NOT ASK FOR A BETTER SUPPORT SYSTEM, AND QUITE FRANKLY, I FIND IT VERY HUMBLING THAT I CAN STILL COUNT ON THEM TO HAVE MY BACK FROM THREE TIME ZONES AWAY.

MOVING TO CALIFORNIA A YEAR AND A HALF AGO WAS, FOR LACK OF BETTER WORDS, A LEAP OF FAITH AND A BIG CHANGE NEEDLESS TO SAY. I HAD COLLECTED A BRAINFUL OF KNOWLEDGE IN MY TWO YEARS AT WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY BUT WAS SOON ITCHING TO RELOCATE MYSELF CLOSER TO A PLACE WHERE I KNEW I COULD TURN MY DREAMS INTO REALITY. PRIOR TO MY BIG MOVE, I WAS A LITTLE MORE NAÏVE, CERTAINLY MORE IMMATURE, BUT ALWAYS CONFIDENT IN THE FACT THAT I BELONGED IN A PLACE THAT WOULD CHALLENGE ME TO DO MY BEST WORK AS A DANCE STUDENT. I BROUGHT WITH ME A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN AND AN EGARNESS TO TURN MYSELF INTO THE PERSON I YEARNED TO BECOME.

UPON MY ARRIVAL TO LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY, I WAS ASOUNDED BY THE LEVEL OF TALENT THAT WAS POSESSED BY MY FELLOW DANCERS. THE INDIVIDUALITY AMONG THEM WAS BEAUTIFULLY ENCOURAGING AND IT PUSHED ME IN TERMS OF MY ASPIRATION TO DISCOVER MY TRUE VOICE. AS A YOUNG AND

DEVELOPING ARTIST I THINK THERE IS MUCH TO BE LEARNED FROM THE FACULTY WHO HAVE MADE A UNIQUE NAME FOR THEMSELVES. THROUGH THEIR TEACHINGS, I HAVE REALIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ECCENRICITY AS WELL AS COMMUNITY. ONE OF THE MOST PROFOUND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ME OCCURRED EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN EACH STUDENT IN MODERN FIVE WAS ASKED TO SPEAK VOCALLY AND THROUGH MOVEMENT OUR NAME, WHY WE DANCE, AND WHAT INSPIRES US. MORE THAN ANYTHING, THIS PROVED TO ME THE UNIVERSAILTY OF DANCE, YET HOW IT HOLDS A VERY EXCLUSIVE PLACE IN EACH ONE OF OUR SOULS. THIS EXERCISE STRIPPED US OF ANY KIND OF JUDGEMENT AND ASKED US TO DISPLAY VULNERABILITY BY TURNING OUSELVES INSIDE OUT IN FRONT OF OUR PEERS. EACH ONE OF US WAS REDUCED TO TEARS AS WE FELT WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO SURRENDER OURSELVES TO TRUTH IN MOVEMENT, WHICH IS SOMETHING THAT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE IN A WORLD WHERE SO MUCH IS STRUCTURED AND CENSORED.

MOST OF THE MOMENTS WHEN I FEEL DEEPLY AND TULY INSPIRED ARE IN CLASS. IT IS ALMOST AS IF THE FACULTY HAVE A SIXTH SENSE AND CAN FEEL WHAT WE NEED EACH DAY UPON OUR ARRIVAL TO CLASS. THERE ARE SOME DAYS WHERE WE WILL WALK IN FEELING SLUGGISH AND DISCONNECTED, AND LEAVE THE ROOM FULLY ENGAGED AND PRESENT PEOPLE BECAUSE OF WHAT WAS SAID, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY WHAT WAS DANCED. IT IS SOMETIMES HARD FOR DANCERS TO LET GO OF THIS UNACHIEVABLE IMAGE OF PERFECTION AND EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO TURN OFF THE VOICE IN OUR HEAD THAT ACTS AS OUR MOST INSATIABLE CRITIC. AMAZINGLY ENOUGH, THE FACULTY HAS TAUGHT US TO QUIET THAT SILLY LITTLE VOICE AND ALLOWED US TO SEE OURSELVES AS UNIQUE, FURTHERMORE ASKING US TO CELEBRATE OUR INDIVIDUALITY.

I NOW FEEL MORE PREPARED TO ENTER THE WORLD AS A PROFESSIONAL WORKING DANCER WITH THESE WORDS OF WISDOM IMPRINTED IN MY BRAIN. I FEEL CONFIDENT IN THE PHYSICALITY OF MY TECHNIQUE, THE MINDSET IN WHICH I HAVE PLACED MYSELF, AND THE USEFUL INFROMATION THAT I WILL TAKE WITH ME ALONG THE WAY TO DEVELOPING A CAREER OUT OF THIS EXQUISITE ART FORM. THOUGH I STILL HAVE MUCH TO DISCOVER ABOUT MYSELF IN THE CONTINUOUS

EXPANSION OF MY IDENTITY, I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT I BUILT A STRONG FOUNDATION OF THAT IDENTITY AT LMU.

FOLLOWING GRADUATION, MY PLAN IS TO WORK WITH D.D.O. ARTISTS AGENCY, TO WHICH I AM SIGNED IN HOPES OF BOOKING VARIOUS DANCE JOBS IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA. I ALSO PLAN ON BECOMING QUALIFIED IN YOGA INSTRUCTION THROUGH SANTA MONICA POWER YOGA'S CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. BASICALLY, MY PLAN IS TO KEEP MY BODY MOVING AND SWEATING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, QUITE SIMPLY BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT MAKES ME FEEL HAPPY. THESE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE TAUGHT ME THAT HAPPINESS IS NOT SOMETHING ONE EMBARKS ON A JOURNEY TO FIND. IT IS NOT SOMETHING AFTER WHICH ONE CAN CHASE. RATHER, IT COMES FROM ACCEPTANCE OF FLAWS, VIRTUOSITY OF THE SOUL, AND TRUE CONTENTMENT WITH SELF. MORE THAN 'BEING' SOMETHING SPECIFICALLY, IT IS MY OBLIGATION TO CONTINUE BEING AN ARTIST AND TO DO WHAT I LOVE; IN THAT, ACHIEVING TRUE PEACE WITH MYSELF.

MY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN NOTHING LESS OF A LEARNING EXPERIENCE. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME EXTREMELY FUN TIMES AS WELL AS SOME EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TIMES. I HAVE LEARNED THAT MISTAKES SERVE THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING LESSONS FROM WHICH I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GROW. I HAVE LEARNED THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON, RATHER THAN CHANCE OR LUCK. I HAVE LEARNED THAT ROAD BLOCKS ARE PLACED IN FRONT OF YOU JUST TO TEST HOW BAD YOU WANT SOMETHING, HOW FAR YOU WILL GO TO GET OVER THE OBSTACLE. I HAVE LEARNED THE UNSPEAKABLE VALUES OF FRIENDSHIP AND HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE THE PRECIOUS ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH I WAS BROUGHT UP. I HAVE LEARNED HOW MUCH FAMILY MEANS TO ME AND HOW TRULY LUCKY I AM TO BE BLESSED WITH A MOTHER, FATHER, AND SISTER WHO HAVE INFLUENCED ME MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE HAS. I FEEL PROUD TO BE ENDING MY COLLEGE CAREER WITH A DEGREE FROM LMU AND AM EXCITED ABOUT WHERE MY LIFE IS HEADED.

"THE JOURNEY IN BETWEEN WHAT YOU ONCE WERE AND WHO YOU ARE NOW BECOMING IS WHERE THE DANCE OF LIFE REALLY TAKES PLACE."—BABARA DEANGELIS

VI. EVERYTHING ELSE

Biography

Taylor Sayig is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University and holds a B.A. in Dance. The Michigan native fell in love with dance when she was ten years old and has since been pursuing it. Within the past few years, she has had the pleasure of working with River North's Frank Chaves as well as Hubbard Street's Whitney Moncrief. She has also performed the work of artists such as Sonya Tayeh, Ryan Heffington, and Holly Johnston. Though her experience of a choreographer has only just begun to blossom, her work has been featured in the LMU productions *Impulse* and *Emerge*. She is currently signed to DDO Artists Agency and is beginning her adventure toward becoming a professional working dancer in Los Angeles.

Artist Statement

As a choreographer, I value truth in movement. I am pulled into artistry that speaks a story or encompasses a vivid thematic purpose. I love to see connection between dancers that is transcendent and real; the visual of two or more people sharing a very personal encounter is beautiful to me. The illustration of personal voice is important to me in this art form. When these human characteristics are combined with musicality and movement that incorporates the full body I become interested in the piece.

Mission Statement

The Taylor Sayig Dance Ensemble encourages the idea that we are all connected. Our goal is to promote optimism, patience, and desire for more deeply invested relationships. The appearance of human connection in art is valuable to society because so much of our lives revolve around things and tasks that we sometimes forget about fully living out the human experience. Through movement, we remind culture of the importance of diving interpersonal connection.

Piece Description

Ne M'Oubliez Pas is a piece that touches upon the unforgiving reality of memory loss that sometimes accompanies old age. The work was inspired by elderly beings who live with the heartbreaking diagnosis of dementia. The piece is danced by four individuals; three females and one male who draw the audience into an experience similar to that of memory loss. The work touches upon the irreversibility of memory loss, the bittersweet memories evoked and relived though the triggering of a stimulus, and how an individual might cope with such a disorder. With the help of music, lighting, costuming, and detail oriented movement, the audience are able to engage in the experience of this kind of memory loss. It sends the spectators back into a memory made in the 1940s. Through the connection between the dancers, the audience is able to participate in the memory as well as in the relationship the dancers share with one another. Ultimately, the piece asks what it would be like to suffer from dementia and displays the bittersweet nostalgia of reliving memories when cursed with such a disease.

Sample Budget

Dancer Pay: \$200 per dancer (per weekend) = \$800

Transportation: One car tank worth of gas = \$50

Stay: One hotel room \$100 per night = \$300

Costumes: \$40 per costume = \$160

Promotion/advertisement = \$80

Total = \$1390

Festivals

-Celebrate Dance (Executive Producer Jamie Nichols) - March 12, 2011 in Glendale

-Laguna Dance Festival (Artistic Director Jodie Gates) - April 14-17, 2011 in Laguna

Review of Holly Johnston as an Artist, Teacher, & Mentor

Classroom work with Holly Johnston is an experience unique in and of itself. I have had the pleasure of taking all of her classes that are offered at Loyola Marymount University including Modern, Yoga, and a Friday Workshop class which focuses on the principles of the Grace Somatomorphic Technique. I call the learning experience unique because she presents her ideals and knowledge in a way that makes it understandable for her students. I have never taken a class where I have seen so much physical growth in myself as well as in my peers. She describes her intentions in a straightforward, yet detailed way that is easy for her students to comprehend. With this comprehension comes ability to demonstrate these desired technical standards. The approach she takes in relaying information to her pupils is exemplified in physical demonstration as well as in hands on activity during which corrections are given. She creates a comfortable learning environment where questions are welcomed and solutions are always given. This sensitivity in a learning environment is important because fear is what limits potential. Within the classroom she creates a community that shares space, breath, and focuses on 'seeing one another.' And though there is a strong sense of communal support that is created here, there is still a healthy competitive vibe in the air that asks the students to rise to the challenge of the "work" presented.

"Work" is encased by these quotation marks because it is what characterizes the very essence of the material Holly teaches as well as what she expects from her students. It is not that she scares or forces her students into working hard to achieve the sometimes seemingly impossible movement for which she asks, but rather they *want* to work. I must attribute this phenomenon to the way she motivates her students, both with her words and artistry. She asks for students to illustrate their drive and enthusiasm into their dancing. It evokes a human quality in the movement and makes it more meaningful and deeply effective. The classroom work is presented in a way that stimulates physical body as well as the spiritual body. This exponentially sparks the potential for growth in the dancers who have the chance to learn in such an environment.

I have had the chance to work with Holly in artistic creation, where she mentored me in the process of developing a choreographic work. In weekly meetings, I had the chance to learn from her experience and vast knowledge as a choreographer and artistic director. The ideas she presented in attempt to aid me in my process were exceedingly helpful in that it brought my work to a level of recognizable maturity. She asked me to invest deeper into my work and pushed the boundaries of my potential. Furthermore, it rendered me a more resourceful and fearless artist whose arsenal of knowledge became substantial. She was an exceptional mentor because she was concerned with the growth of her students in their artistic exploration rather than pushing her sole preferences or wants. She made the experience about us discovering ourselves as choreographers, with her much valued help. One of the most beautiful characteristics of this process was the contented atmosphere that was created in these meetings where we were able to speak openly to each other as mature artists without apprehension or timidity. She made it clear that she wanted us to flourish, and with her assistance, flourish we did.

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Page 1/1

November 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 10:00 PM Rehearsal	12 ... Rehearsal	13
14	15	16	17	18 11:00 PM Rehearsal	19 ... Rehearsal	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Rehearsal 10 PM-12	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Rehearsal 6-8 PM	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Rehearsal 10 PM-12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1 Rehearsal 9-11 PM	2	3	4	5

February 2011

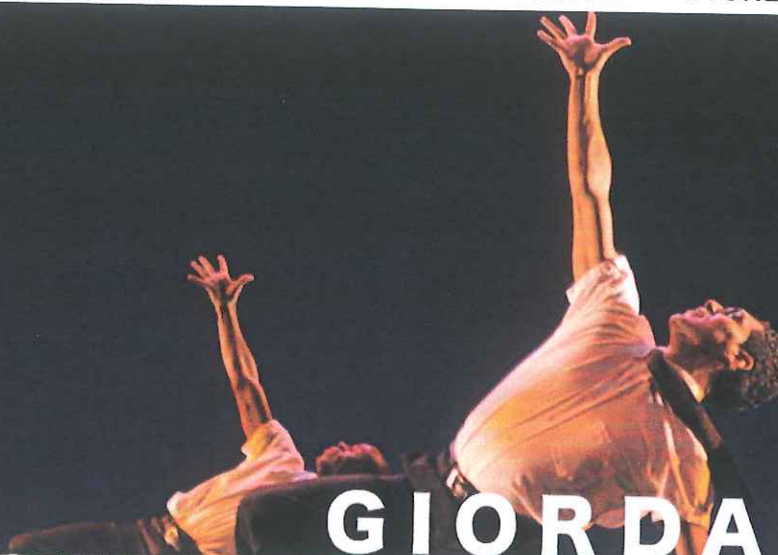
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	Rehearsal 9-11 PM	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	Rehearsal 9:30-11 PM	10	11	12
13	14	Rehearsal 10 PM-12	16	17	18	19
Rehearsal 7-9 PM	21	Rehearsal 8-10 PM	23	24	25	26
20	28			Adjudications at Convo		
27						

March 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Rehearsal 10 PM-12	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Rehearsal 9-11 PM	23	24	25	26
27	28	29 Spacing Rehearsal	30	31 Concert Run Thru in Studios		

April 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29 Specting Rehearsal	30	31	1 Concert Run Thru in Studios	2
3	4	5 Final Rehearsal of Piece	6 Tech Rehearsal of Dance	7	8	9
10 Tech 2nd Half of Show	11 Dress Rehearsal # 1	12 Dress Rehearsal # 2	13 Show 1 of Student Concert	14 Show 2 of Student Concert	15 Show 3 of Student Concert	16 Show 4 of Student Concert
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago has a very active outreach and education program, including school performances in the Chicago metropolitan area, a residency with the Chicago Park District, and teaching residencies on many college campuses.

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Hubbard Street Dance Chicago is among the most original forces in contemporary dance. As one of the only professional dance companies to perform year-round, HSDC is continually touring nationwide and internationally. Now in its 33rd year, the main company has appeared in celebrated dance venues in 44 states and 19 countries.

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago is:

BOLD – Critically acclaimed for its exuberant, athletic and innovative repertoire, Hubbard Street's dancers display unparalleled versatility and virtuosity in performances that inspire, challenge and engage audiences worldwide.

NEW – Continually expanding its eclectic repertoire with work by leading national and international choreographers, the company contributes to the art form's evolution by developing new choreographic talent and collaborating with artists in music, visual art and theatre.

INTERNATIONAL – Performing around the world for more than 80,000 people each year, Hubbard Street serves as an emblem of the city's international cultural profile.

UNMATCHED – Performing works by world-renowned choreographers including Nacho Duato, Jiri Kylian, Aszure Barton, Ohad Naharin, Twyla Tharp, Jorma Elo, Johan Inger, Alonzo King and Victor Quijada.

INSPIRATIONAL – The company has become a respected training ground for young and professional dancers, with over 120 classes and workshops held each week through the Youth Dance Program and Lou Conte Dance Studio. HSDC is also proud to have the oldest Parkinson's Program in the Midwest, using dance as a form of therapy and continually evolving the notion of who can dance. When Hubbard Street isn't teaching and training here in the studios, we are reaching more than 20,000 families and students annually through our innovative school programs, in community centers, and in theaters throughout the country.

HARD-WORKING – Under the dynamic leadership of Artistic Director Glenn Edgerton, Hubbard Street is one of the only companies that employs its dancers year-round. With an annual budget of nearly 6 million dollars, and ticket revenue covering only a small portion of those expenses, our board, staff, and community partners work to raise the funds and develop the resources necessary to keep Hubbard Street teaching, training, developing new work, and inspiring students and audiences around the world.

Hubbard Street is moved, quite literally, by dance.

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VISION: River North Chicago Dance Company is dedicated to the creative advancement, presentation and preservation of jazz based contemporary dance regionally, nationally and internationally.

MISSION: RNCDC produces, promotes and presents dance; makes vital connections between dancers and audience; creates partnerships and collaborations; assists in the professional development of dancers, choreographers and dance professionals; participates in cultural programming; and advocates dance and dance education.



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Mission and History



About Thodos Dance Chicago

"Breathtakingly athletic," "powerfully beautiful," performing "vibrant choreography" are among the many critical accolades that Thodos Dance Chicago (TDC) has received. This ensemble of well-rounded artists who teach, choreograph, and perform brings contemporary dance to a wider audience with an appealing style incorporating a variety of dance forms created and performed with an innovative flair. The Company's *highly unique mission of inspiring expression through dance education, dance creation, and dance performance* has established Thodos Dance Chicago as an innovative presence in American contemporary dance.

Highlights of the Company's annual performance season include the Fall and Winter Concerts, touring engagements, as well as, the "New Dances" choreography series presented each summer. TDC has been featured at Chicago's annual "Dance for Life" fundraising benefit for HIV/AIDS and in Dance Chicago's month long Fall Festival of Dance. Thodos Dance Chicago has performed in more than 50 venues in 10 states, in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the International Istanbul Dance Festival and the Ankara Music and Dance Festival, at the Busan International Dance Festival in Korea, and at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. In addition to numerous individual studio artists and musicians, TDC has collaborated with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Remy Bumppo Theater, as well as, with Fulcrum Point New Music Project.

In addition to performing choreography of its resident artistic staff and Chicago-based choreographers, TDC performs a diverse array of works created by other well known choreographers: Tony-Award winning choreographer Ann Reinking, who has set two works on the Company; internationally acclaimed American choreographer Lar Lubovitch; the New York team of Shapiro & Smith; and west coast choreographer Amy Ernst, formerly of the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company; and most recently Ron De Jesús. In addition, TDC ensemble members themselves create highly-charged, illuminating world premieres every year in the Company's acclaimed "New Dances" choreography series that audiences have found "exquisite," "phenomenal," and "inspirational." Selected works from the series are chosen to become part of the Company's repertory the following year, and have also been performed by the Joffrey Ballet and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

Reaching young minds through dance education is vital to Thodos Dance Chicago. As a teaching Company, members of this highly trained ensemble hold BAs and MFAs in dance, and teach at the elementary, high school and

university levels. TDC is well suited for residency programs where performances, lecture demonstrations, workshops and master classes go hand in hand. TDC is in residence at The Menomonee Club for Boys and Girls where it teaches daily classes and operates a Youth Ensemble. Thodos Dance Chicago also offers a robust dance fitness curriculum for adults through partnership the Chicago Sport and Social Club and hosts a week-long intensive program every August geared to advanced, pre-professional and professional dancers.

Thodos Dance Chicago is supported by the Illinois Arts Council - a state agency, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs - City Arts Program II, The Alphawood Foundation, The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and many individual and corporate sponsors.

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Chicago Dance Crash

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The Company



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Founded in 2002 by Producing Director Mark Hackman, Chicago Dance Crash has emerged as a critical staple of the Chicago scene, engaging audiences and broadening the exposure of dance. With a unique union of styles both classic and contemporary, including ballet, capoeira, breakdance, acrobatics, and contemporary dance, Crash burst onto the scene in its first season with the new and innovative movement play concept. The inaugural production of *The Mercutio Story* premiered at the Mary Arrchie Theatre before hitting the road for a two-week run at The Space in downtown Manhattan and capping off the run with a finale performance at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre at Navy Pier.

Years of steady growth followed with numerous appearances on the festival circuit and joint concerts. In the summer of 2005, Crash raised critical eyebrows with *Tribulation* and the *Demolition Squad*, the first of three full-length productions selected for the Departmental of Cultural Affairs' Storefront Theatre season.

In 2006, the summer epic *Ghost Play* premiered at Theatre Building Chicago, eventually receiving the Katherine Dunham Award for Best Choreography from the Black Theatre Alliance. That December, Hedy Weiss of the Chicago Sun Times named Dance Crash among a select and small number of professional companies that helped make 2006 "a banner year for dance in Chicago."

In the spring of 2007, Hackman and Kyle Vincent Terry premiered *The KTF Championship* at the Lakeshore Theater. The adrenaline-packed dance-improv showdown packed houses and led to a highly successful open run that continues through 2010. That summer, Dance Crash returned to the Storefront Theatre with the martial arts extravaganza *Tiger Prawn: The Mountain Mover* before closing the season with the *Destructible Daytrip*, choreographed entirely to the music of underground hip hop legend EL-P, who attended the closing weekend. At season's end, Sid Smith of the Chicago Tribune hailed DDT as "innovative and stunning" and proclaimed Chicago Dance Crash to be of "critical importance to our dance scene."

Heading into our seventh season, Crash received its highest honor to date, being named the Reader's Choice as 2009's 'Best Dance Company' by the Chicago Reader. Following this honor, CDC broke all previous company box office records with the all-male concert series *Movement/Gentlemen* at the Storefront.

Now entering our eighth season, Dance Crash continues to redefine the art form and bring dance to the people. CDC recently took over the long-running concert festival "Duets for My Valentine" and is helping to launch the newly formed Laura Twirls Foundation. With innovative, collaborative performances, the Dance Crash family continues to support artists, expand partnerships, and foster the growth of dance in the community.